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Restless Americans

Reaction to the flight of *Columbia* raises historic questions about American character and provokes doubts about the future of international comity.

Restless Americans

THE AWE-INSPIRING performance of the United States space shuttle *Columbia* has brought new hope and inspiration to the American people. Praise has been almost universal for *Columbia's* nearly flawless mission. Richard L. Strout, of the *Christian Science Monitor*, recalling Charles Lindbergh's New York to Paris flight in 1927, commented, "Today the nation shudders over an attempted assassination and the tragedy of Atlanta's murders. And now, as half a century ago, bold adventure in the sky lifts hearts for a moment at a time of spiritual thirst."

However euphoric and proud one may feel about the country's collective achievement, it might be wise to keep in mind the uncertainties which preceded *Columbia's* launch. Three years behind schedule and \$3 billion over budget, the space-craft was delayed by mechanical problems up to the last minute. All this suggested that the United States' vaunted technological preeminence was indeed slipping. Even with a letter-perfect liftoff people remained dubious. One technician at NASA's Houston space center remarked incredulously, "I kept waiting for something to go wrong—but nothing did."

SUCH SKEPTICISM reveals a deep-seated apprehension Americans have traditionally shared about their place in the world. While visiting the United States in the 1830s, the French aristocrat and sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville observed that Americans were "restless in the midst of their prosperity." Equality of condition had brought opportunity

but no security. Although the attainment of material success was abundantly evident, anxiety prevailed and none were content: "The desire of acquiring the comforts of the world haunts the imagination of the poor, and the dread of losing them that of the rich." Tocqueville's contemporary, Walt Whitman, in praising his fellow countrymen's march to the Pacific, called Americans a "resistless, restless race."

And so they continue to be. Domestic competition has gone global since World War II, and Americans agitate, push, climb in order to remain ahead of the Soviet Union. Without fully understanding the implications, the United States, driven by the specter of international communism, ventured into outer space to confirm American military power and technological supremacy. The country has not advanced much beyond the original need to "beat the Russians" which motivated the space program during the 1960s.

How in fact is the space shuttle's evident superiority to be used? The question is open. Many fear that by default its use will be chiefly military. Thus *Columbia*, the symbol of the future, raises the same timeless questions posed by Paul Gauguin in the title of his nineteenth-century portrait of South Sea island natives *Where Do We Come From? Who Are We? Where Are We Going?* Unless we come to terms with these concerns and cease to be impelled by the ghosts of failure, America may not, as John Young proclaimed, be on its way to the stars but instead on a journey to star wars.

—W. Anthony Gengarely

The Burden of the 1980s

Higher Education and the Changing World of Work

by Thomas A. Mulkeen

THE AMERICAN experience has been shaped by expansion and nurtured in the confidence that the gross national product will never stop growing. The certainty that expanding productivity would eventually permit every group in our society to prosper without having to take something away from anyone else has been the chief sustainer of America's standard of living.

In the four decades since the end of the Second World War the affluent society arrived and departed, and a new and less confident era began. Our national development was based on the supposition that the supply of resources was limitless. But the age of abundant capital and labor, endless raw materials, and low-cost energy is over. The American economy is troubled by stagnating productivity, high unemployment, and the debilitating combination of surging inflation and high interest rates. The infants of the baby boom are now mature

adults, and their numbers will create an unprecedented economic strain well into the next century. For them, the future will be marked by slow growth, declining productivity, energy shortages, chronic inflation, and growing poverty. Their employment opportunities will be affected both by the shift of population, markets, and industry to the Sun Belt and by the transfer of multinational operations to more profitable locations abroad.

To compound the difficulties, world population is swelling, resources are shrinking, and the rich-poor gap is widening. And the Third World has made

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known its intention to gain control of one-quarter of the earth's wealth and productive capacity by the year 2000. Meanwhile, the planet's carrying capacity is reaching its limit.

WHILE acknowledging a coming age of scarcity, we must at the same time note the growing dominance of technology in our economic system. In the past two generations new technologies have replaced workers in the agricultural industry. Factory production has been heavily automated; robots at some plants assemble products entirely without human hands. In the last decade dramatic advances have been made in computers and communications. The size and cost of computer systems have been greatly reduced by the microprocessor. Cost-efficient transmissions over long distances have been made possible by telecommunication satellites. The microprocessor even threatens to revolutionize "white collar" work: the new technology has the potential to eliminate not only clerks and secretaries but highly skilled professionals.

These technological innovations allow the productive process to be fragmented into a variety of component operations that can be performed at different production sites across the globe. Increasingly, low-paid workers in developing countries are employed for simple assembly tasks while more complex functions are carried out by relatively skilled workers in more advanced societies.¹

Technology grows in importance as the production process becomes more intricate and, since clever machines do not necessarily need brainy workers to run them, its effect may be to kill jobs. Fewer Americans are finding a productive role in the economy. The failure of large numbers of educated people to achieve their career goals, as well as the diminishing ability of the educationally less favored to improve their position, could engender a discouraged and disgruntled attitude in a large segment of the population—with potentially dangerous political and economic consequences to the nation.

FOR THE FIRST TIME in our history the problem of income inequity will have to be faced without resort to the solution of economic growth. We have never been forced to make hard decisions about income distribution. But in an age of scarcity reality will require that some large group tolerate a reduction in its standard of living. No one wants to volunteer for this, and we have a political process that is incapable of forcing any interest group to shoulder the burden of income reduction. Yet, in our "zero-sum" society fundamental problems can no longer be solved without a consensus as to whose income will go down.² For Americans who have viewed

getting "more" as part of their birthright the adjustment to the hardship of "less" will be difficult. Personal frontiers will shut down, opportunities will become limited, and deeply held values will be modified.

We are in a transition from one economic, political, and social system to another whose outlines are as yet unclear. The old technic of energy as substitute for man's muscle is being replaced by a knowledge technology as substitute for man's mind. With the stockpile of

In an age of scarcity reality will require that some large group tolerate a reduction in its standard of living. No one wants to volunteer for this.

knowledge growing at a bewildering rate, experts find it difficult to keep pace with advances in their own fields, let alone in other disciplines. It is now apparent that people, in their initial educational preparation, cannot acquire all the skills and knowledge that will be helpful in future years, because some of the skills they will need are either not now recognized or have yet to evolve. A large percentage of jobs now being filled did not exist a generation ago; and people entering the economy today will have to contemplate the likelihood of several basic job or career changes together with a work life longer than that of their elders. Worse, the competition for good jobs will be fierce in an oversupply of qualified applicants.

WHAT will be the role of higher education in preparing Americans for a different society? Higher education was part of the larger revolution that transformed the nation from an agrarian to an industrial system. However, in recent years a discrepancy has begun to emerge between employers' needs and prospective workers' educational qualifications. The world of work has undergone a far-reaching metamorphosis, causing a disjunction between what is expected at the workplace and what college graduates are prepared to do. Higher education has not kept pace with the technological revolution. The typical curriculum of the American college has not changed substantially since the turn of the century. Instructional methodology remains entrenched in the past. Corporations are now training their own people, bypassing universities as presumptively inadequate centers for education and training. Over one-half of the labor force of the industrialized nations is, or soon will be, in the service sector.³ Many of the service professions require training that is multidisciplinary. The university education of the multidisciplinary generalist calls for a very different emphasis, challenging both the resources and the integrity of the traditional academic structure.⁴

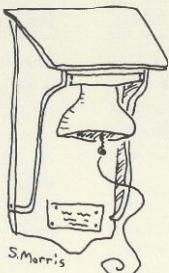


At the same time, the resource base of higher education has shrunk. Institutions face declining enrollments, inflation, slowed growth in federal educational spending, and a loss of public confidence in the value of the academic degree. Faculty positions have vanished, competition to maintain existing positions and programs has intensified, and most academic administrators have responded by trying to recreate the 1970s on a smaller model.

At a time when personal computers, television discs, and other new products of high technology are transforming the ways of processing information, higher education maintains its one-sided emphasis on the spoken and written word. Instead of confronting the implications of technical change, our colleges and universities face backward toward the Industrial Age. The educational reforms of the 1960s and early 1970s have come full circle. Faculty, departments, and deans once more command the campus with new sets of mandated requirements, textbooks, lectures, examinations, and grades. The college curriculum places heavy emphasis on the accumulation of facts. There is little time for thinking. The students are passive. They now use college as a vocational training ground for adapting to the present social and economic system. Aware that jobs for liberal arts majors are hard to get, they compete for places in business administration, engineering, and other "sure-fire" paths to employment, while the colleges seek desperately to keep liberal education alive.

CAN HIGHER EDUCATION respond to the changing world of work, or has the economy become too complex and too technical for schooling to keep up? With the shift to technology comes a need for new coping skills. The basic "raw materials" for the worker of the future will be information and imagination.⁵ A large part of education will consist in helping students to learn how to gain access to information and how to use it to their advantage.

In a world where we can no longer acquire knowledge once and for all the most useless courses are those which teach an array of facts, for the material will not be remembered past the final exam. New modes of instruction must be developed. It is vital to replace learning as examination-oriented fact gathering with a concept of education as inquisitiveness, sequential thought, and problem solving. Education must teach us how to learn, how to cope with change, and how to build up a body of knowledge that continually evolves all through life. The problems of the future will not be resolved by emphasis on a narrow vocational focus, partly because the skills so imparted are likely to become useless and partly because the readiness for switches in direction is more likely to be enhanced by breadth of knowledge and understanding.



We are in an age when we face problems that no single discipline can resolve, and we need people who can pull together and integrate knowledge from a wide variety of fields. Higher education must equip this generation and its successors with the critical faculties needed to make sound choices. The information explosion will draw increasing numbers of Americans into lifelong learning activities. New skills will constantly have to be mastered. Educational opportunities will be distributed over the whole life cycle with a flexibility that will alternate education with work and leisure.

FOR THE country's colleges and universities, which are among America's most tradition-bound institutions, anticipating and accommodating the learning needs of tomorrow's educated person creates new unknowns and poses unprecedented challenges. Clearly there is need to educate for more than a particular career, to communicate a deeper understanding of science and technology than earlier generations had, and to build closer collaboration among science, technology, and the humanities. We must give today's students more responsibility, individualize the academic process, redefine the course structure, and make interdisciplinary studies a focus of educational experience. While supporting the value of the traditional major, institutions should also consider dual-degree programs both within their own walls and between professional schools and schools of arts and sciences.

Interesting ideas spring up at the boundaries of knowledge, where people can work on the same problem from different viewpoints and come to the realization that they have common interests. Faculty and students should no longer look at their work from detached perspectives but in an overlapping context

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where their disciplines are valued for their special contribution to the exploration of a particular issue or problem. There must be a way of building a curriculum that teaches students to think across subject fields. We cannot train them in every subject they will use during their careers, for we simply do not know what they will need years from now. Universities are slow to evolve new categories of knowledge, but the next quarter-century will doubtless bring new disciplines with new names. In the meantime, interdisciplinary programs

will allow students to work toward a new synthesis by challenging the resources and integrity of traditional disciplinary structures.

THIS, of course, connotes substantial changes in what it means to be a faculty member. Instructors must be free to develop new courses and to combine and recombine with colleagues in opening new academic fields in response to changing student needs. Relationships with faculty from other disciplines will lead to the development of team-taught courses—as in the case of artists and philosophers exploring problems of perception, biologists and psychologists examining concepts of human nature, or engineers discovering that while they are studying transistors they are actually solving a psychological problem.

Tied to cross-disciplinary inquiry is a concern not only for what is taught but for how it is taught. Learning how to learn must become progressively more important. Students must accept the responsibility of being central agents in their education, and faculty will expect to share authority with them for the definition and direction of their academic programs. A creative tension will evolve between traditional faculty authority and a new valuation of student choice.

Technology will play a more important role in the educational process. In learning laboratories the student will go at his own pace using programmed material on tape, film, and other electronic media. Computer technology will multiply the number of places where learning can occur. A person will literally be able to carry education with him and fulfill requirements anywhere there is a telephone or an electrical outlet. Technology will allow the student to acquire all necessary basic information before he undertakes real inquiry into academic problems. He will then use the classroom to absorb process skills rather than facts. Faculty members will be freed from devoting valuable time to dispensing basic information and to drilling students in elementary skills or factual knowledge.

Thus, classroom instruction will be able to shift from a knowledge base to a process base. Class sessions will be places where students and teachers order, sift, analyze, evaluate, reflect on, and synthesize information. The responsibility of the faculty will be extensively for the transmission of that kind of learning for which inquiry and discovery modes of teaching are appropriate. This will represent a sweeping change in the way faculty and students engage one another in learning.

NOR CAN EDUCATION cease with the granting of a degree. Lifelong learning programs will be the indispensable adjuncts of high technology and rapidly shifting economic needs. This will demand a commit-

ment of institutional and faculty resources which will amount to a fundamental transformation of the academic community. Most educational institutions are still designed for young people who have few responsibilities. They are ill-suited to men and women who must fit education into a busy life. The adult learner population will be older and part-time, will contain more women and minority members, and will be, by traditional standards, less well-prepared. Such students will obviously require instructional approaches quite different from those suitable to the traditional college undergraduate. Arrangements will need to be

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highly flexible, so that education is made available to anyone willing and able to learn under circumstances suited to personal convenience and with a curriculum shaped to meet a series of individually articulated goals of personal growth and professional reeducation.

Since adults have a commitment to job and family, they will very often want to learn sitting at home—on their own time and at their own speed. Technology will enable this to happen. The home will become an ever-increasing societal force,⁶ and through computer technology educational institutions will be able to offer academic programs to adult learners in their living rooms.

Academic programs can be made subject to a contract system under whose terms students and faculty will agree on the work to be done, the methods by which objectives will be reached, and the particular instructors who will guide and evaluate performance. In addition, institutions must integrate adult learners into the regular program by greater use of short courses, workshops, seminars, and institutes. Scheduling will accommodate student need rather than faculty convenience. At issue, then, is the ability of the campus to befriend a new set of learning requirements with a reorganized curriculum and revised teaching methods.



IT IS an understatement to say that curricular and instructional changes of this magnitude require the effective participation of faculty. Schooled in a long and honorable tradition, faculty are charged with the function of transmitting the culture of society—apprehended both as static achievement and dynamic evolution. Confronted now with broad and significant social upheaval, faculty must seize the 1980s as a decade of self-

FIRE AT THE DELANOS

"Their underclothes are all gone—Is it not a terrible misfortune? Yet they feel so grateful that all have escaped with life and limb that they bear their losses like philosophers—better, like Christians."

It was as if the night
held calamity in it
but never did I think
that Mrs. Delano would arrive
unattended
in only a gown and shawl,
and that fire
that very night
would consume their beautiful house,
everything:
furnishings, dresses, preserves,
essences, spices, pictures,
books, everything
gone. A blessing
that Mr. Delano was here and not
in Canton. Dashing back in
in his cap and nightshirt
to rescue the money and accounts.

And now tonight
walking up from dinner at Mrs. Ritchie's
the ladies on the arms of the gentlemen
it was as if we had just risen from the dinner table
 to find the house around us
 in ruins; the moonlight
entering there, softening, polishing;
the strange beauty of things gone. The moon
 picking out with its light
 so small and invaluable an object

by Abbot Cutler

as Mrs. Delano's gold thimble
there in all the blackness.

Mrs. Delano said that the moon is a woman and understands, is sympathetic to women, which I

have felt, especially
at sea,
a communion at first
strange to feel.

The Malays believe

Note: The voice in the poem is that of Rebecca Kinsman, who sailed to Macao, China, in 1843 where she lived with her young children while her husband traded between there and Canton. The passage that precedes the poem is from one of Rebecca's letters home.

"Fire at the Delanos" will appear in Abbot Cutler's 1843 *Rebecca* 1847 to be published this year by Rowan Tree Press. Mr. Cutler is a part-time instructor in the English Department of North Adams State College.

improvement. At present, faculty development programs at most institutions are limited to orientation sessions, travel to professional conferences and workshops, sabbatical leaves, and research support. The most active programs are designed to help instructors upgrade and update knowledge of their academic specialty. These accepted concepts of faculty renewal are now being questioned. Shifting enrollments and changing curricular choices often leave a surplus of tenured faculty in one department and a shortage in another. Traditionally, institutions were able to hire new members to cope with these conditions, but in the future this option will be limited. With a stable instructional staff and volatile student and institutional needs it will become necessary to reallocate resources so that faculty in academic areas with falling enrollments may participate in other programs. An interdisciplinary curriculum will permit faculty to belong both to a department and to one or more interdisciplinary teams.

Realistic assessment must take note of morale factors. The declining rate of growth in higher education has resulted in decreased faculty mobility. Fewer young scholars are preparing for academic careers. Faculty face retrenchment, high inflation, and lower-than-expected salary increases. Fewer tenured positions await junior faculty. Furthermore, according to a recent Rand study of educational change, teachers seem to "peak out" after five to seven years on the job.⁷ Faculty personnel, like any other professionals, have a propensity to become less exciting and excited, to stop growing, and to cease renewing themselves.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT can focus on institutional change, offer an alternative to retrenchment, and have a positive impact on morale and performance. Educational leaders will be well-advised to plan renewal programs around institutional agenda which take into account the faculty, their careers, their courses, and the students they teach. There is an obvious case to be made for the diversification of teaching loads and the release of faculty for study, reeducation research, and curricular planning. Sizeable funds should be committed to these purposes. Such monies might be administered in the form of an internal organization operated like a foundation. Under the direction of a committee of faculty, the foundation would encourage instructional staff to make proposals for the development of educational and research ideas.⁸ In addition, faculty development ought to be linked with the reward system. Administrators must make it clear that in recommending salary adjustments appropriate attention will be paid to renewal activities. Promotion and merit pay which support faculty development with salary increases are most persuasive and substantial forms of incen-

tive. Funds allocated to specific projects in research and curricular development create an environment which encourages excellence, raises standards of expectation, and engages faculty in lifelong learning activities that acknowledge their understanding of the continuous transformation of their role over the span of time spent in the profession.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERS are therefore faced with several critical policy issues to be resolved in the coming decade. These will include instruction and curriculum design, new technologies, the integration of nontraditional learners into higher education, and resource development. New strategies will have to be found which will deliberately balance lower levels of resource consumption and organizational activity with ascending levels of service demand. Because academics resist being managed, academic planning is invariably difficult. Traditionally, educational policy has evolved by slowly adjusting to new conditions with incremental changes. But planning will take on a more radical character in a period of crisis when programs have to be changed, curtailed, or abolished.

Unfortunately, contemporary educational leaders have been trained for an event that is not going to happen. Most of the literature on organizational theory and management practice assumes that the organization is expanding, or is interested in expanding. But the agenda has changed. Models which explicitly suggest how organizations can cope with substantial resource decline are lacking. We know little in education about allocating scarcity. The educational leader of the next decade will have to develop new academic programs in a milieu marked by little or no enrollment growth, shifting enrollment patterns, "graying" faculties, limited or declining financial resources, collective bargaining negotiations, and legislative requests for increased accountability.

Faculty personnel have a propensity to become less exciting and excited, to stop growing, and to cease renewing themselves. . . . There is an obvious case to be made for the diversification of teaching loads and the release of faculty for study, research, and planning.

Despite these constraints we cannot afford to let higher education stagnate. Policy making must, in part at least, be subject to a new systems design that rejects unwarranted pessimism and aspires to improved planning. Plainly, strong and courageous management is needed to provide clear direction, since the programs discussed here will only be realized at the expense of others.



Faculty and institutions have turned inward just at a time when public leadership by higher education is vitally needed by society. There is pioneering to be done in a nation entering a period of deep change. The challenge to higher education is to move into a phase of leadership that addresses the problems of transition to the postindustrial world and their implications for its own viability.

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The Dissolution of Party Discipline

Whatever Happened to Political Parties?

by Robert Bence

THE 1980 elections are now history. We have seen a significant increase in the number of Republicans in positions of power in Washington. Does this signify the rebirth of a new and strengthened Republican party and the return of a viable two-party system to the United States? Hardly. Had the two-party system been functioning as it once did, more Democrats would have turned out to vote and there would have been more enthusiasm among our citizens for the political process. The resurgence of American conservatism is not directly related to political party activity. In the past election we again witnessed a continuing trend of low voter turnout (52%) coupled with a high degree of disgust for the quality of presidential candidates and considerable unhappiness with the electoral system in general. Even in the placid 1950s people went to the polls in greater numbers. Although there is a multitude of factors to explain voter apathy, confusion, and disenchantment, the demise of the two-party system stands out as a primary explanation.

An active, "responsible" political party system can provide citizens with clear choices and a framework of issues that help give the voter a political identity and guidelines for rationally choosing between candidates. When there is mass participation in party activities more citizens work in campaigns, share political information with their friends and neighbors, and generally feel more positive about their ability to

influence government. Although a large number of Americans still use their party preference as a voting cue, the percentage has been diminishing steadily in the last decade. With no clear distinctions between the parties, we are left with the unsettling process of basing our votes on superficial images of candidates or on out-of-focus issues. The crumbling of the party system has taken away another of our political signposts, weakened our sense of continuity, and impaired our understanding of the electoral system.

The reader should not be left with the impression that the "good old days" of strong parties constituted a political utopia. Kingmakers in smoke-filled rooms in Tammany Hall, corruption and bribery such as the Teapot Dome scandal, and nomination convention debacles like Chicago in 1968 were not especially proud moments in our history. But despite the distastefulness of the back room dealings of party bosses, we did have a much higher sense of political efficacy. Political parties never operated according to the ideal model, but at least they helped us to identify who was in charge of elections and government.

WHAT HAPPENED to our political party system? Well, too much to explain fully in the scope of this essay, but we can indicate some of the major causes of decline. In our reaction against the abuses of political parties we have come close to reforming them out of business. The Progressive movement at

the beginning of this century sought to cure the evils of party excess by removing the base of their support—patronage. Civil service laws served as a disincentive for party workers, who no longer would see a direct economic reason for actively participating when the political arena ceased to provide them rewards in the form of jobs. While the Progressives instituted a variety of other reforms—for instance, the nonpartisan ballot and city managers—civil service acts removed the backbone from political parties at all levels of government.

A new generation of progressives reacted to the 1968 Democratic Convention with another round of reforms designed to democratize elections. Nomination of presidential candidates was taken almost completely out of the hands of political parties by the widespread growth of presidential primaries. In the last three elections the presidential candidates have locked up the nomination before the convention. Delegates to these anachronistic gatherings have little to do except to cheer on cue and soak up the local culture of the fortunate convention city. Almost all nominations for office at any level of government are now decided by primaries, a system which leaves party leaders to watch in frustration as the candidates' organizations compete in the image-making arenas.

The Campaign Finance Acts of 1971 and 1974 have further reduced the role of political parties. The funding of presidential candidates is more the responsibility of the national government and of (barely visible) political action committees than of the parties, which once used their financial leverage to insure that candidates would toe the party line. Thus, candidates have little reason to believe they should be responsible to either a party leader or a platform.

THE IRONY of election reform is that an attempt to make the system more democratic has had the practical effect of blurring party lines, making it more difficult for the citizen to understand the connection between his vote and public policy, and creating a power vacuum that has been filled, not by interested citizens, but by a new breed of power brokers. Candidates who now know they cannot rely on party organizations for support and funding have put together their own campaign staffs. These people operate behind the scenes more deftly than the most devious kingmakers (not excluding the late Mayor Daley of Chicago), who at least had an incentive to be responsible to their constituents. These isolated

staffs usually consist of political technicians, pollsters, and advertising people who profess more of a commitment to the strategy of winning than to any high idealistic principle. The epitome of this type of organization was the Committee to Reelect the President (the infamous CREEP), which in 1972 showed an almost unbelievable disdain for democratic principles in its drive to keep Richard Nixon in the White House.

In the past, political parties served as a source of information for voters. Party workers, many of whom were our patronage-seeking neighbors, would tell us in an informal, one-to-one setting about their party's views on issues. They urged us to look at their candidates and platforms, to participate and vote. We now watch television, getting dubious images of candidates and a feeble grasp of issues through an impersonal medium. Our political involvement is as remote as the business of changing channels.



REFORMERS should not receive all the blame for the demise of parties. Our political culture has also played a role. Most of us have the same basic political philosophy (liberal democracy), and it is usually political suicide for candidates or parties to deviate from the sacred middle ground of politics. But even in the comparatively narrow ideological spectrum in the United States it is still possible for at least two parties to give us some clear choices on public policies. Third parties are usually doomed because of restrictive election laws and the fact that presidential candidates cannot win unless they receive more than fifty percent of the vote.

If a functioning party system existed, it could provide us with people and organizations to go to if we decided to take an active part in the political process. If candidates were tied closer to the platforms and organizational support of their parties, and if they could place more of their supporters in office, we would have a clearer sense of who is responsible for the course of our government. Americans should not be condemned for their failure to participate or vote when the disappearance of political parties has confused the meaning of elections and taken away their primary vehicle for meaningful participation. The problem of apathy is systemic, not individual.

Robert Bence is Assistant Professor of Political Science at North Adams State College.

BOOKS

Two Reviews of *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century*, by Jane Weiner LePage. Scarecrow Press, 1980, 293 pp., \$16.00.

The Public Recognition of Women in Music
by Dwight D. Killam

IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY women are beginning to win some recognition and acceptance in the various fields of human endeavor, and their progress toward such acceptance in the field of music is an encouraging part of the trend away from bias. In music, as in many other fields, women have suffered in the past from carefully circumscribed perceptions of their role. Certainly, music was considered an acceptable domestic accomplishment for a woman. In public performance women singers achieved recognition and even fame in the last century; and performance on instruments, notably the piano, was well received on occasion. But the entry of women into composition or conducting, into orchestral performance, or into musical scholarship was as restricted as was their entry into many of the more obvious "men only" occupations and professions.

Despite these obstacles a few women of superior determination and ability have achieved personal musical success and, in all-too-few instances, general recognition. It would seem the time is ripe for all of us to recognize these accomplishments, as well as the work of other women undeservedly neglected, and the potential which women have for far more significant contributions than our society has yet permitted them. Jane LePage's book represents a small but solid step in this direction and is a resource that should find use in a wide variety of situations.

Through personal interviews and participation in concerts, through correspondence, and through research in primary sources, Professor LePage has constructed portraits of seventeen important women from the world of twentieth-century music. The portraits are succinct, averaging less than twenty pages each, and contain extensive quotations from interviews, letters, and reviews. Each concludes with a list of compositions (recordings, in the case of the conductors). Choice of subjects spans the twentieth century rather well, from Wanda Landowska (1879-1959) to Barbara Kolb (b. 1939). The writing style is informally readable, and topics are covered at a rapid pace. The index is comprehensive. All these factors make the book easily accessible to a variety of reading publics—the high school student who would like to know about women in music, the college student in a

course in twentieth-century music, the professional musician or music educator, and the interested lay-person. More significantly, the book is not one to lay aside after reading but rather one that will serve as a ready reference to the teacher, reviewer, or writer of program notes: for most of these women continue active in music today and, for many of them, even greater achievements lie ahead.

AROUND any work of this type the greatest contention will undoubtedly arise over selection. Does Landowska belong? Why not Sarah Caldwell? But even as the question is asked, one can think of justifications; the point is raised chiefly to illustrate the impossibility of covering the field in one slender volume and of trying to satisfy all readers. It is also important to note some things that the book is *not*. There are no musical examples, nor are there detailed analyses of compositions. There is no attempt to probe beyond the public persona of the various women or to challenge their self-assessments. The book is certainly not propaganda, but to the extent the author takes a position it is one of advocacy.

In short, then, this is a useful, readable book. It provides basic information and interesting personal details about seventeen of the most important women associated with the world of music, either currently or in the very recent past. It belongs in every high school and college library and is certainly a worthwhile investment for the personal bookshelf of any musician or music lover. Jane LePage has rendered an important service to the world of women and the world of music.

Towards an Androgynous World
by Lea Newman

DWIGHT KILLAM praises Jane LePage's book for drawing long overdue attention to the accomplishments of women composers, conductors, and musicians. He acknowledges the "important service to the world of women and the world of music" rendered by her work—and yet something about the tenor of his commentary rankles.

Shortly after the book's publication I had volunteered to review it for this journal. Realizing, however, that my knowledge of music is severely limited, I suggested that a dual review might be appropriate: one from a colleague in the Music Department, and mine from a feminist perspective. Killam inadvertently encompassed both views, and his position was essentially the same as mine. Why, then, did I find myself unsettled? As I tried to identify what it was about his assessment that disturbed me, I discovered a fundamental fallacy in his approach—and, much to my dismay, in mine as well.

The key lay in Killam's closing sentence in which he refers to LePage's contribution to the "world of women and the world of music." The dichotomy inherent in the two worlds he evokes is symptomatic of the bias both Killam and I unconsciously reflect. For when I envisioned a twofold review, I, too, was projecting a double world—one of women, the other of music. The implication in both cases is that the world of music is the domain of men. We were conceding a historical reality: until very recently the world of music *has* been a world of men. The same can be said for literature, politics, law, medicine, and almost every other field of human achievement.

Unfortunately, by projecting the patterns of the past on the present we reinforce the historical model. And whether we do it consciously or not, the effect remains insidiously the same. Women are relegated to an arena different from men's, a place apart with another set of values and standards. The *separate but equal* myth is as much a ploy of the sexist as it used to be of the racist. *Separate* means not only unequal but inferior. Every competent professional deserves to be measured by the criteria of the discipline and in company with all the practitioners in the field. Assigning a professional who happens to be a woman to a subdivision called "women *anything*" denigrates that professional's abilities and accomplishments.*

THE POINT could be made that by writing a book devoted exclusively to women in music LePage herself is contributing to a split in the professional music world. She addresses this issue in her preface:

Ideally, there should be no need to separate the sexes; merit should be based solely on artistic ability. Unfortunately, this has not happened, even though recorded history shows that women have been composing since the third century. The societal structures did not provide for public presentation or documentation of their work. A few compositions written by women were performed and published under the names of their brothers or husbands, or under male pseudonyms.

LePage's objective, to eliminate the inequities of the past as swiftly as possible, justifies her focus. Her purpose, as is the purpose of every women-oriented

article, book, journal, course, and program, is to compensate for the neglect of centuries.

In so doing, however, feminists, myself included, must beware of creating a "special studies" category where women's contributions lose essential connectedness with humanity and society and are seen as something less than authentic. Virginia Woolf, whose book *A Room of One's Own* has become a manifesto for women's rights, proposes not a feminist ideal but an androgynous one: all human beings should be allowed to fulfill their potential, male and female aspects thereof alike. Men and women are human first, male and female second.

Once such an ideal androgynous world is achieved, the professional distinction between a male and female conductor, composer, or musician becomes meaningless. Books like Jane LePage's will help attain that ideal by correcting the record and giving women the credit they deserve. In the meantime, women, like those represented in this book and like the author herself, should be judged by the same professional standards as are applied to their male colleagues. The seventeen biographies in this volume attest to the genuine accomplishments of the subjects and the biographer. The highest competency marks all of the women whose work is reviewed; LePage's research and documentation are of the same high caliber. In the androgynous world of Virginia Woolf's vision these women would be judged as equals with men. When our society has reached this ideal, the separate domain we call the "world of women" will no longer exist because it will have become an inextricable part of all humanity's quest for excellence.

*My particular experiences in the field of literary scholarship have been fortunate in that I have, for the most part, worked with colleagues who did not use or condone sexist labels. Nonetheless, however much women scholars and teachers may enjoy the respect of their colleagues, their income remains disgracefully lower than their male counterparts'. LePage's book does not address the issue of remuneration. One hopes that the list of publications and recordings, the performances reviewed, and the conducting and teaching posts reported are translatable into monetary rewards as well as into the equally real compensation of aesthetic fulfillment. I would like to think the disparity between worth and recompense for women in music is less shocking than for women in other fields.

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The drawings in this issue are by Susan Morris, of East Dover, Vermont.